

## **Brunswick Preservation and Revitalization Committee**

### **Meeting Notes - March 18, 2019**

**6:00PM - 7:00PM, Brunswick City Hall**

**Attending:** Kelly White, Brian Keller, Alan Miner, Mary Bellamy, Nathan Brown, Kimberly Golden Brandt

**Guests:** Sheila Bashiri, Elsa Haarstad, Wes White, Andy St. John, Norm and Karen Cornelius

#### **Conversation with Sheila Bashiri with the City of Rockville**

The committee was joined by Sheila Bashiri, Preservation Planner with the City of Rockville. Sheila shared her experiences overseeing the City of Rockville's Lincoln Park Conservation District.

1. Similar to Eastport, a Conservation District was established to address changes in the built environment that residents felt were inconsistent with the character of the community (too contemporary).
2. Overall, Sheila felt that the Conservation District was enacted too late.
3. Sheila noted that design guidelines and a demolition review process are imperative for maintaining character.
4. For Rockville's demolition review, the Mayor and Council make the final decision after review by the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission. The staff makes a recommendation.
5. Sheila advised against exempting structures less than 50-years-old from demolition review, citing her experience with significant structures built in Rockville the late 1960s and 1970s that are vulnerable to teardown.
6. Rockville has a process for local landmark designation. The property owner must be informed, but is not required to be the applicant.

Sheila also went into detail about her time working within the State of Michigan's preservation program.

1. Birmingham and Detroit's preservation programs include substantial demolition-by-neglect provisions – if a property is falling into disrepair due to neglect and the owner refuses to fix it, the city can make the repairs and put a lien on the property.
2. Sheila commented that their preservation program did a great job of increasing home values, as it became “prestigious” to live within the district.

The committee was interested in learning about economic incentives for preservation. Sheila mentioned tax credits (federal, state, and local), low-to-zero interest loans, and grants. Regarding foundation grants, Sheila mentioned Caroline County's Historical Society and the impressive fundraising they have done to support acquiring and restoring historic structures. A local non-profit preservation-oriented organization could pursue foundation grants, host events, and use platforms like GoFundMe to raise money for preservation initiatives.

1. **ACTION ITEM: Kim and Elsa will research conservation districts in other states and potential funding sources.**

2. **UPCOMING: The Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions 2019 Symposium is on May 18, 2019.**

**Other Items**

1. The budget request to update the National Register nomination has been submitted to the Council; a presentation to the Finance Committee will likely be scheduled.
2. Kim submitted the Heritage Grant application discussed at the previous meeting in detail. Awards will be made in April.
3. There has been no interest expressed in the committee vacancy.
4. The committee will address meeting frequency at next meeting to determine if weekly sessions are still necessary.